



# 5 Secrets to Improving Your Soccer Skills

**Become a Better Soccer Player Today**

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## **Table of Contents**

1. Scoring Goals is all About Confidence
2. Doubling Your Advantage by Using Both Feet
3. Nutrition is Crucial for Your Performance
4. Winning Heading Duels
5. First Touch is the Key

## 1. Scoring Goals Is All About Confidence

You've attended every practice, made kick after kick and honed your aim to razor-sharp accuracy.

Even so, you just don't seem to be making the goals. What are you missing? If you are like many other soccer players, your main problem may be confidence.

Although confidence isn't taught in any practice drills, it is a trait that can be of huge use in soccer, especially when it comes to [scoring goals](#).

Nothing in the game of soccer is as nerve wracking as shooting for goals, and it's easy to see why.

The success of your team in this game may depend on the success of these few crucial seconds. Two full teams of soccer players and often a sizeable number of spectators are watching.

Suddenly your past performance doesn't seem to matter; all you can think about is whether the ball will go in. A slight lack in confidence can lead to huge problems here.

There are a few signs that a lack of confidence may be an issue for you. First, do you find yourself over thinking [every soccer move](#) as the goal looms nearer?

Do you tend to picture the ball missing or being caught up by the goalkeeper rather than seeing it sail past him?

Do you get physical symptoms, like a stomach ache, excessive sweating, and nervous shaking as you prepare to shoot? If so, you need to work on your confidence.

While there are no practice drills that will give you confidence, there are a few exercises that can help build your mojo:

1. **Practice positive visualization.** When you are alone, try picturing yourself approaching the goal. See the defenders practically falling out of your way and your teammates cheering as you effortlessly make the score. By doing this often enough and picturing a variety of positive scenarios will counteract the negative thinking that may be plaguing you.
2. **Examine your expectation.** If you expect that every shot is a future goal, you are going to feel disappointed and let down in every single game. Even the best strikers don't score even half of the goals they attempt and

- there is no reason to hold yourself to a higher standard. Learning to accept these disappointments, recover quickly and move on is an essential part of playing the game of soccer.
3. **Don't be intimidated by your opponents.** Goalies and other defensive players tend to be large and imposing figures and you are going up against them every game. While they may seem imposing, they are merely soccer players just like you, with a similar level of skill. Intimidation is part of most teams' defensive strategy, so avoid letting them be so successful in wearing down your confidence.
  4. **Practice your basic skills.** Nothing will help your confidence if your skills truly are not up to par. Practice basic skills like [dribbling](#), passing, [kicking](#) and you will feel more confident when it comes time to kick.
  5. **Create a supportive atmosphere on your team.** If there is a lot of back biting and criticism on your team, you will have a hard time building your confidence. While you cannot control the actions of others, you can be as encouraging as possible and foster a supportive atmosphere on your team. If you are quick to judge your teammates' failures, they may be equally critical of you, but if you give them the benefit of the doubt they are likely to repay with similar courtesy.

### Summary

If confidence is an issue that is keeping you from scoring, you should work on it until you are comfortable.

Confidence will intimidate your opponents, inspire your teammates and ultimately win more scores. Don't let another game be sabotaged by the power of negative thinking.

## 2. Doubling Your Advantage by Using Both Feet

There is one common trait that almost all [successful soccer players](#) share: the ability to play accurately and quickly with both feet.

This one skill can give players a huge advantage because it effectively doubles their opportunities to dribble, pass, receive, and shoot.

It cuts down on the time necessary to execute complicated maneuvers and generally makes a soccer player's job just a little easier.

Success will be almost impossible without having this vital skill, so working to develop it is bound to pay off. Here are a few areas where being able to use both foot is crucial.

### **Dribbling**

Because you will spend much of your time with the ball moving it around the field, knowing [how to dribble](#) with both feet is essential.

It makes it harder for your opponents to tackle and makes your movement more difficult to predict. You can go up against defenders confidently, able to shift the ball from foot to foot without losing control.

### **Passing and Receiving**

If you can only pass and/or receive the ball with your dominant foot, you will constantly have to shift your weight around to accommodate this preference.

This will use up valuable time and also alert your opponents about your plans. Knowing [how to pass and receive](#) with either foot alone can improve your game immensely.

This is a skill that can be practice easily; however, it will take you a lot of time to master it completely. One thing you can do is pass the ball with your non-kicking foot to a wall and then receive it with the same foot.

### **Shooting**

If you can only shoot with your dominant foot, you are likely already aware of what a detriment this can be.

Having to shift your feet before shooting can be disastrous to your game. Every time you shoot, the goalie will be aware and waiting to intercept the ball.

## 5 Secrets to Improving Your Soccer Skills

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This is the skill where being able to [use both feet](#) will pay off quickest and it's easy to see why.

Being able to do this with both feet will make you quicker and more accurate, a clear advantage that can place you head and shoulders above the opposing team.

To practice shooting with your weaker foot, simply set up two cones, or even better, use a real goal and start shooting.

You may be shocked at the lack of coordination you have with your weak foot at first, but this will pass with time and hard work.

Focus on using good technique to avoid creating bad habits and don't let frustration make the process more difficult than it needs to be.

Improving your non-kicking foot will require work, but it will be more than worth the effort. A [one footed player](#) is slower, less effective, and more predictable.

### 3. Nutrition is Crucial for Your Performance

Here is a nutrition list that you may print out and put on your refrigerator:

1. Try to eat a well-balanced [soccer diet](#) every day.
2. Never miss a breakfast, lunch or dinner. These three are vital for your soccer performance and will be key to how well you will perform on the field.
3. Sleep well, because your body needs to break down the food and convert it to energy. You should try to sleep at least 7.5 hours per night and not more than 8.5. The ultimate goal is to sleep for 8 hours but you should not panic if you don't manage to fulfill that.
4. Fast food would not give you [quality energy](#) (protein, carbohydrates and fat). Eating too much fast food will make you gain too much weight and you will become slower. However, if you really like fast food try to eat it at maximum once per week.
5. Calcium is important to get strong bones. Good calcium sources are low fat products (less than 3% fat) like milk, yogurt and cheese.
6. Iron is also important as it carries oxygen through your body. Low oxygen means that you will get tired fast. You can find iron in red meat, chicken (without skin) and pork.
7. When playing soccer, you will also need zinc because it forms the building blocks of your body and helps in repairing and growing tissues. Zinc is important especially if you are injured often. You can find zinc in meat and fish.
8. Try to have water as your drink of choice. There is no better drink than water and the best thing is that you don't have to pay for it :-).
9. Try to choose snacks with low fat and low sugar. However, snacks like peanuts or cashew nuts contain good fat and you should eat these often
10. Eat a lot of fruits because they are the best and healthiest snacks you can find. I try to eat at least 2 apples per day. The funny thing is that I never get tired of eating my apples :-)

## 4. Winning Heading Duels

Heading duels are among the most dramatic moments in a soccer game. There is a huge potential for either gaining footing - or losing it. This is without doubt one of the [most important skills](#) for any soccer player, as heading can make all the difference in both your game and the team's success. If every 50-50 ball is going to your team, that is a lot of potential scores. Here is a concrete, step-by-step plan for success.

1. Determine the ball's line of flight and put yourself in its path--almost. You will want to be just a foot or so back from the expected point of impact to allow for forward movement. If possible, keep the ball in your sight at all times and try to stay ahead of opponents.
2. Time your positioning so that you can take a step forward and jump to make contact with the ball. This will give you more momentum and therefore, a higher jump and a more solid attack. You would be surprised at the difference a step can make.
3. As you jump, put out your elbows and arms to keep competition back and away. Raising your arms too dramatically may cause a penalty to be called, but simply keeping your arms slightly to the back and away from your body with flexed elbows should go a long way toward asserting your space without causing a problem.
4. Keeping your eyes focused on the ball, head the ball to your desired destination. If possible, head the ball with the area just above your eyes. Using your lower forehead will not only give you greater control over the ball, but reduce the risk of injury as well. As a bonus, this allows you to keep your eyes on the ball through the point of contact.
5. Remember form. It's important that you use [good heading form](#) in heading duels, however difficult it may be in the high pressure, low reaction time situation. After all, the point is not so much to take possession of the ball as it is to give possession of the ball to another member of your team. Using good form will ensure good control and prevent the more common injuries.

## 5. First Touch is the Key

Do you have a truly exceptional first touch? While practice can do wonders for teaching you [how to handle the ball](#) from the moment it touches your feet, here are a few basic concepts to keep in mind whether you are a newbie to the position just learning this vital skill or a veteran working on improving your team's offensive play.

- 1. Take control immediately.** You cannot afford even a second of hesitation. Your first touch should be taking control of the ball; your second touch should be proactive, moving the ball where it needs to go.
- 2. Aim toward your goal as a default.** When you don't know where to go, start moving the ball toward your goal. You can then think about what you are going to do next. This practice prevents that moment of hesitation that can lose games, and moving a ball toward the goal is rarely a bad idea. Unless the ball is under pressure, in which case...
- 3. Steer the ball away from the opposing team.** It seems intuitive, but many players panic at this moment and try to get through the opposition. Go *around* the crowd, go *away* from the crowd, go anywhere except *into* the crowd.
- 4. When under pressure, pass.** If the opposing team is moving in on you from all different sides, you likely won't get very far with the ball. The best option in this case is usually to [pass the ball](#) to the nearest open teammate. It's important to make this decision and execute early, before you are completely surrounded.
- 5. Follow through.** Once you have committed to a course of action, don't be intimidated. Follow through unless there is a compelling reason not to. However....
- 6. Be flexible.** If the play you originally envisioned is clearly not going to work out, switch to Plan B immediately. Don't waste another second on a strategy that won't yield results.
- 7. Shoot, if you can.** Sometimes a window for a goal opens up just as the ball hits your feet. If you see this, go for it! Every second you hesitate is a

second that the opposing team is noticing that same window and working toward closing it.

- 8. Use your body to protect the ball.** If you intend to keep possession of the ball, even for a second, direct your body so you are always directly behind the ball. This may take some fancy footwork, but, after all, this is soccer.

### **Summary**

Why is a [good first touch](#) so important? Your first touch is likely the first of many, and it will set the tone for the rest.

If you take control immediately and move the ball toward a score every time you touch the ball, your team is practically guaranteed a victory.

Your first touch is the first step toward a score, whether it's your team's score or your opponents'. There are truly no gray areas when it comes to this essential skill.

### **Closing...**

That should be it. If you follow the roadmap in this report you will soon be able to improve your soccer performance. Of course, do not forget the most important ingredient which is to play games regularly. You can never replace the experience from a real game with practice as these are crucial for your development.

I would love to hear your feedback.  
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